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# ART EDUCATION

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1

## ART EDUCATION FOR THE ADOLESCENT

MAYO BRYCE  
Associate Professor  
of Art Education  
San Francisco  
State College



The philosophy of Art Education closely parallels changes in trends and movements in the general development of educational thought. It reflects many of the democratic currents in thinking which have made the American school curriculum among the most respected in the world.

In education, philosophy is generally in advance of practice. Seldom, in the development of any philosophy, do all disciples keep abreast of the current concepts. Some resist progress on general principles; some are apathetic or indifferent in following developments; still others fear criticism in experimenting with new ideas. Most educators have a tendency to reject or accept new ideas according to the flexibility of their own personalities or their teaching situations. For this reason, a wide variation in teaching methods in all subject-areas, ranging from excellent to poor, can be seen in the schools of our nation.

### Ways of Looking At Art Education

Three divergent points of view toward Art Education may be seen in classroom practice today. One is the "directed method" which requires the child to follow certain prescribed rules and directions; absolute criteria of judgment are assumed to be possible in this approach. Still popular and diametrically opposed to the "directed method" is the "free-expression" method which allows for a maximum of freedom for children and permits a minimum of "interference" from the instructor. The third method is a compromise

between the two and has as its key word "guidance."

To "guide" means to direct, to show the way, to lead. The word carries powerful connotations—especially in Art Education—since one of its current implications is to help the child become sensitive to the beautiful aspects of his world. At the same time, another is to aid him in nurturing aesthetic judgment to the end that he may better function in his environment. These implications can have no greater meaning nor more profound significance than they bear for adolescents.

### Art Experiences Can Help the Adolescent

In order to pass from childhood to adulthood, the adolescent must solve a number of problems. He must develop heterosexual interests, become free from home supervision, achieve economic as well as intellectual independence, and learn how to use his leisure time. He must also make new social and emotional adjustments and begin to evolve a philosophy of life. He is often overwhelmed with these new adjustments.

It is impossible to think of adolescence as a static, unchanging condition. The impact of this period varies from person to person, from generation to generation, from culture to culture. Art work inevitably reflects these variances and thus results in wide variations of individual art expression. Art experiences under the guidance of a sympathetic teacher can often ease, and some-

(please turn to page 2)

### IN THIS ISSUE

- ★ EDITORIAL      • ART EDUCATION FOR THE ADOLESCENT  
Mayo Bryce
- ★ FEATURES      • DOCTRINE, DICTATORSHIP AND THE EYES OF CHILDREN  
John Adkins Richardson  
Edwin Ziegfeld
- ★                  • SYMBOLISM IN CHILDREN'S ART  
Sidney D. White
- ★                  • THE ADMINISTRATOR VIEWS TRENDS IN ART EDUCATION  
Ralph R. Fields
- ★ NEA CENTENNIAL ART EXHIBITION
- ★ PROFESSIONAL NEWS

## **ART EDUCATION FOR THE ADOLESCENT**

(continued from page 1)

times, even solve the problems of this difficult period of transition.

There are four major ways in which a well organized Art Education program can help an adolescent grow toward maturity.

### **Art Experiences Can Contribute to Physical Maturity.**

Adolescence marks gains in physical strength and increased motor co-ordination which result in smaller muscle activity. An increasing critical awareness of environment determines a new interest in visual perception. These two factors working together make the product of art of more importance to the adolescent than the process of creation itself; as a result there is apt to be a rejection of previously accepted art experiences.

It is necessary that the teacher keep in mind the physical background of the adolescent child so that she may understand this new phase of art expression which is the result of physical growth. This places a new responsibility upon the teacher. It is up to her to select art and industrial art media according to the changing physical needs of this age group and to help the individual adjust creatively to the divergent demands of his world.

### **Art Experiences Can Contribute to Emotional Maturity**

To the adolescent, basic emotional drives can be a source of great anxiety or abounding joy. It is unfortunate that these basic needs or drives cannot always readily be met in our schools at the time of greatest need. However, in the lives of adolescents, when these drives do find a form of expression that satisfies, there is often significant strengthening of positive behavior.

The desires of the adolescent for approval, for domination, for social recognition, for attention, for security, and for happiness can be satisfied through well-planned art experiences under the guidance of an informed, sensitive teacher. A diversified art program, enriched with selected art media geared to parallel adolescent growth patterns, can make a positive contribution to the

emotional development of boys and girls of this age level.

### **Art Experiences Can Contribute to Social Maturity**

The problem of establishing desirable personal and group relationships is one of the paramount concerns of early adolescence. One of the first responsibilities of the school is to help the child become conscious not only of himself as an individual but also of the fact that life requires of him cooperation and self-discipline in terms of others' needs.

Contemporary Art Education, as a counterpart of the curriculum, has played a considerable role in promoting a program to help individuals in this direction. Art projects are often related to social problems, both within the school and the community. Art activities have been devised to encourage children to exchange ideas and also to accept responsibilities. Such experiences as these are organized to aid the adolescent realize that his actions affect other people and that other people pass judgment upon him.

The alert teacher can guide the individual of this age toward understanding that there is little maturity in any self-expression which is not related to social structure.

### **Art Experiences Can Contribute to Intellectual Maturity**

As children grow older they have a tendency to become less and less willing to accept statements made on the basis of authority alone. They must see evidence. They have a hunger for general knowledge which is expressed by a desire for specific information. Furthermore, in adolescence many interests arise, often too many to be simultaneously sustained; later on, these interests narrow to a few which tend to become permanent.

This, a time of questioning, can be an exciting period for the adolescent. It can be a period either of frustration or one of reward. It is possible for the individual to emerge either as a defeated personality or as an individual who is eager and ready to face new and interesting pursuits in living.

Creative expression based on a sound philosophy  
(please turn to page 19)

# DOCTRINE, DICTATORSHIP AND THE EYES OF CHILDREN

JOHN ADKINS RICHARDSON

and

EDWIN ZIEGFELD

The suspicion that art education might be nothing more than a community of paradoxes must have occurred to every critical observer in the field. There is scarcely an area of education in which so many apparent contradictions prevail. One can note, for example, the stages of development of children in art that have been formulated by psychologists and art educators during the last half century. During the 1930's, the Nazis used these stages as instruments of indoctrination while here, in a democratic country, the same stages have been used as a means of gaining insights into the growth of young people. Again, nothing could be more popular or persuasive than the notion of the sterling art teacher as an artist of excellence. Still, the greatest teachers of painting in recent times—such men as Gustave Moreau and Eugene Carrière—have invariably been minor artists.

As is the case with many paradoxes these vanish when subjected to sober reflection. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt has pointed out that the Nazi educators used the stages of development in art to promote conformity, whereas we have attempted to use them as an analytical tool: that we do not demand a Cézanne in every classroom, but hope for a competent artist sensitive to the expression of others.

Unfortunately not every contradiction that assails us is so easily resolved. *W Oczach Dzieci* is a case in point. *W Oczach Dzieci* means **Through the Eyes of Children** and is the title of a volume of Polish children's drawings published in 1955 by the National Publishing Enterprise for Children's Literature, an official organ of the government of Communist Poland. The Polish Embassy, without solicitation, has distributed it

throughout the United States, and many teachers and directors of art were recipients of a copy.

Since the book was published prior to Poland's bloodless "October Revolution" of 1956 which shook Moscow—the results of which are apparent to the whole world—it was possible to anticipate its contents. Anyone familiar with the tight, schematic art work of Nazi children or the tiresome academicism of official Soviet painting will have no difficulty predicting the description of its contents. And their prediction will be about 100% wrong.

The book is a mystifying document. It contains 101 color reproductions of very good quality. With few exceptions they are of works which would do credit to any elementary school class from San Francisco to the Atlantic seaboard. And they are not selected from a single class nor from a particular locale. Children from every part of Poland are represented. B. Maczynski is a twelve year old from Warsaw. His "The Raising of the Nazi Cruiser 'Gneinesau'" resembles in its manner and intensity the work of the late John Marin as much as any child's painting could. "The Palace of Culture and Science at Night" by another child of the same age is a prism blazing in the night of a soft blue field. And these are but two of a great many charming works. Moreover, the quality of these pictures is not contingent upon a set of technical devices or formal solutions contrived by the teachers. Freedom of expression is instinct in almost every work. Such spontaneity cannot be achieved through "gimmickry" or coercion. There can be little doubt that these pictures were done in a relatively "permissive" atmosphere and are the fruit of children's interests.

It would appear then that **Through the Eyes of Children** constitutes a challenge to many beliefs fundamental to the art education movement in the free world. Those beliefs are grounded in the tradition of Western liberalism which equates the liberation of the arts from political ends with creative freedom and quality of production. We have plenty of evidence to indicate that all modes of activity behind the iron curtain have some political contingency. So we are faced with a problem, for we also have plenty of evidence to

support the beliefs the Polish book seems to contradict.

The results of authority imposed upon the artist are well known. No matter how accomplished an artist Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, the dictatorial power he and his colleagues wielded over their students produced only a vast dessication of talent. In recent times, the dangers dictatorship presents to art have been still more apparent. Nazi official art was deplorable. Soviet painting is incredibly dull. The psychological conditions of modern life seem to be such that authority is inimical to vitality in the arts.

Whenever an instance contrary to this maxim has come to light, a rationale able to account for it and explain away the contradiction has also presented itself. For example, such an instance seems to reside in the curious fact that Picasso, Miro and the notorious Dali all were born of Spain, a nation suffocated in the mysteries of the ancient Church, a dictatorship in which the constabulary marches the rural highways at fifteen-minute intervals. However, these men are, without exception, expatriates. Quite possibly, then, the spirit determined not to be thwarted will seek out political circumstances which permit its expression.

No such obligation seems readily available to account for the existence of **Through the Eyes of Children**. What is to be made of this? Have we been duped by the "capitalist press"? It seems unlikely that people as various as Henry Luce and George S. Counts are engaged in a conspiracy to mislead us as to the nature of Communist education.

Are we being duped by the Poles? This seems more likely. **Through the Eyes of Children** is certainly a propaganda piece. Since the function of propaganda can hardly be to alienate us, the possibility exists that this book is a purely political document designed to appeal to the sympathies of Western educators. Clearly, such a hypothesis could explain away the conflict between our stereotypes and the character of the work reproduced in the book.

It also seems to account for the English text of the two-page mimeographed "blurb" attached to the inside front cover. That statement is as diplomatic as a northern Democrat in backwoods

Georgia. No Stalinist cliches, as such, occur here. The caress of reason lingers, only somewhat obscured by the *ideé fixe* of industrial reconstruction:

The imagination of children is rich, lively and creative, They see not only what exists today but what will exist at some future time. A 10-year-old shows what one of Warsaw's downtown sections will look like when it is completed and a 12-year-old draws a dam which will not be finished for a decade.

This is a pretty uncontroversial statement. Substitute for "Warsaw" any American community devastated by flood or fire and the statement will seem quite unexceptional.

A cogent argument, then, could be made for the theory that this is propaganda addressed to the free world and nothing more. But why should the text of the book itself be in the Polish language? After all, if the book is aimed at the Polish audience behind the Iron Curtain as well as to us, the pure propaganda theory is unsound, for **Through the Eyes of Children** would then constitute an official (if unsystematic) statement of educational goals. We would still be faced with the anomaly of the ideal of "free expression" within a totalitarian system.

Faced with such a complex situation, disquieted by the knowledge that this could as yet be neither an occasion of belief or disbelief, one's first desire was to know exactly what was said in the eight pages of Polish text. Inasmuch as neither of the authors speaks Polish someone else had to be found to undertake the job of translation. This chore fell, as good fortune would have it, to Mr. Frank A. Walchak, an art supervisor in the Philadelphia Public Schools. Without involving themselves in too vast a digression the authors cannot express adequately their appreciation of Mr. Walchak's generosity or their regard for his splendid work. Suffice it to say that this article is far more dependent upon his abilities than upon ours, for it was his translation that provided its genesis.

Mr. Walchak did what he terms a "tight translation," avoiding elegance of style in favor of exactitude. Such a translation sometimes takes curious liberties with English syntax, but the meaning of the original is always clear. The difference between the translation and the mimeo-

graphed "blurb" is striking; so striking that it leads us to revise our whole opinion of the book—but in a rather interesting way.

The stamp of official sanction is definitely upon the pages of the text. And it is unlikely that it was ever meant to be read by non-communist eyes. The political overtones are so heavy as to be leaden:

The war is two-faced in the eyes of children—the heroism of those who liberated, restored hope and peace by arms, and then (the aspect) of those who . . . abused, destroyed life and killed joy.

But behold the strong, belabored hands of the Stalin-grade soldiers turning the wheel of history—the fascists are running away!

**But that is of the war and the past. The revolution is in the present and to the future:**

Their (the children's) beloved subject is building. A new bridge, new road, new electric production, a renewed radio station . . . The imagination of a child is vivacious, rich and creative. It sees not only what is but also what will be. Childish dreams and visions have concrete realistic forms. The vision of New Warsaw painted by a ten-year-old boy is completed and everyday seems anew by the children who never see enough of the Palace of Culture with its shooting tower.

**The West comes in for a few indirect licks. Note, in this passage, the reference to the river which forms part of the boundary between Poland and divided Germany:**

But can one express himself explicitly when the head and heart are warm but the hand false? Can you draw the fact that peace is needed for children like to breathe, like the sun for flowers? . . . The eight-year-old Chesaus from Krosna knows that the blue river Oder looked upon every day is the boundary of peace . . .

**Most illuminating of all, though, is the following:**

The young generation is growing fascinated by the colorful and romantic work, charmed by the fruit of the labor. It is growing in culture for "Work is the law, duty and affair of honor." The sense of the beautiful words of our constitution is understood better with the heart than with the mind.

Quite obviously these words are not meant to appeal to the sympathies of Americans, but to those of the Poles. The art work itself caters to practically universal predilections. It is free, unrestrained in mode of operation and extremely charming. But, in the last analysis, the paintings are the spontaneous gestures of fairly intensive conditioning, "artistic reflex actions" one would be tempted to say. But to interpret all this as

"brainwashing" would surely be to perpetuate a hyperbole. The matter is simply that the field of themes legitimate for inclusion in pictures by school children of Poland has, in the main, been narrowed to things political in any one way or another.

We have every reason to assume that the educational experiences antecedent to "picture-making"—i.e. the "motivating activities"—are also characterized by their political bias. Such experiences can be seen in part as emotional exercises which enable the mind to jump to conclusions beyond the bounds of logic or reason. This kind of indoctrination is the subtlest form of despotism. But its very existence points up the desire which is at the root of so much Communist socio-psychological theorizing: the desire for a society so conditioned that it sees itself as liberated from all restraints **including the burden of political error.** In other words, in the ideal state one has the right to do anything but make a mistake.<sup>1</sup>

For some time now art educators in the free world have had good reason to think that any show of skill or sensitivity would be, for the Red artist, a blunder of gross proportions. There seems no reason at this time, to revise our opinion as it regards adult art in the Soviet empire. As far as child art is concerned the Polish Communists seek to remove (and, indeed, do so) the creative expression of children from that of adults. There is no reason to believe that, because the art work in *Through the Eyes of Children* is qualitative, Communist adult art will become more so. However, there is no good theoretical reason that it cannot, within limits. What after all, is the function of the arts in the Communist world?

In *Illusion and Reality* Christopher Caudwell—among the ablest and most influential of the Marxist aestheticians—says that art is produced by the society and has a social function to perform, that function being to adapt the responses to economic cooperation by adjusting the conflicts of the individual, nature and the society.

<sup>1</sup>That many prominent Americans have expressed similar desires in recent times serves to demonstrate only that the dictatorial ideal can thrive as well as other ideas within a democracy.

Caudwell finds Shakespeare bourgeois, not bad. The modern arts, he feels, are troubled by the isolation of their creators from society. Were it possible for modern art to represent, not the individual sensibilities of the bourgeois, but the ideals of that brotherhood of the industrial class—the proletariat—it would have a purpose in contemporary society. Unfortunately it is, by nature, dedicated to the illusion of individualism and introspection.

Caudwell's ingenious theory, at once orthodox and reasonable, admits of those things the aesthete holds dear but limits the thematic frame of reference; does so at least in effect. Is it not just this aesthetic that *Through the Eyes of Children* illustrates so well? It certainly seems so.

We might imagine our original paradox resolved. After all, Marxist theory provides a justification for the kind of art work reproduced in the book. But this is a rather superficial resolution. We are not interested in the problem as an intellectual exercise. Ultimately, we are concerned with what amounts to a moral issue. To us, the notion of art education used as a political weapon, to indoctrinate and proselytize, is repugnant. Beyond this emotionally charged reaction, for those of us unable to envision history as described by the irrevocable working out of the dialectic, any educational policy which demands that all creative endeavor have a political base and social function presents the most wicked dangers.

There must be a few sophisticated and iconoclastic spirits among us who are asking themselves: "Why do they ramble on about the matter? If the kids' work is good, it is good—regardless of the uses to which it may be put. If the classroom permits free reign of the imagination it is free. We ourselves do not accept every theme for our children; the erotic, for example, is out. Surely the authors can see that to say the art education in Poland was bad because it was Communist is like saying that plywood is an unacceptable building material because it was invented by a Russian. The important thing is the quality of the image quite apart from its genesis."

The authors would be among the last to knowingly commit the "genetic fallacy"; i.e. judge a

thing on the basis of its generation, as per the examples above. We do not say the work is bad because it is Communist. Nor do we hold that any content matter whatsoever is tolerated in the free world's schools; we are well aware of the contrary. We are saying that only a single class of themes was (in 1955) available to the Polish child, and it is this we find disturbing and dangerous.

Our contention would be that in the modern world any categorical limitation on the arts will eventually thwart the creative energies of the culture. One cannot have a restriction as to theme without having at the same time a limitation on variety of plastic invention, despite all the sophomorish talk to the contrary.

There is no way to state with any degree of precision the relationship between theme and style, but it is possible to demonstrate that some relationship does exist. Perhaps this is most clearly illustrated if our attention is directed to the thematic content of a style of painting no one any longer practices but which gave birth to our most cherished ideas about there being no relation between one's subject and one's painting of it.

The subjects of a Cubist still-life are manipulatory objects of a specific kind: bottles, wine-glasses, cigarettes, newspapers, musical instruments, and so on—the objects of casual Bohemian life. Naturally, if one were to ask Picasso or Braque why they painted these particular objects they would say simply that these were at hand. But why these available objects and not others? If we describe a painting by listing the things depicted and list those mentioned just above, you immediately respond: "It's Cubist." But if we were to say: "It also contains an ink bottle and draftsman's pen," you would reply that it must be "die Neue Sachlichkeit" or later. And if we add: "It contains as well a jade idol," you realize it is neither Cubist nor "die Neue Sachlichkeit" but something quite different and probably mimetic. And it might be pointed out that no one with any sense of proportion paints a ten by ten foot still life. The still life is a theme of intimacy—not of heroic proportions. Even a so-called "non-objective"

(please turn to page 19)

# SYMBOLISM IN CHILDREN'S ART

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This article is based upon an exhibit of children's art recently prepared with material from the children's art laboratory of the Art Education section of which Professor White is director.

SIDNEY D. WHITE

Assistant Professor of Art

School of Architecture and Allied Art  
University of Oregon

## I. INTRODUCTION: THE HUMAN SIGNIFICANCE OF SYMBOLIC ART

No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled net of human experience. All human progress in thought and experience refines upon and strengthens this net. No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances . . .<sup>1</sup>

ERNEST CASSIRER

Man, beginning his imaginative and creative life as a child, is a creator of symbols. His highest achievements, however physical and spectacular, are ultimately derived from the symbolic innovations of "child-men" like Einstein, Bach, Euclid, Giotto and countless others both remembered and forgotten. These are child-men because the human capacity to symbolize, to give form creatively to the world as it is personally felt and understood, did not die as the child that was gave birth to the man that became.

Because we can but meagerly comprehend or measure the inner force that carried these men, relatively unscathed, through the barrier of established forms, we set them apart from all other men. We stigmatize them with the mark of difference and call them "geniuses". Perhaps the obvious and undramatic truth escapes us, for call them what we may they remain what they are, child-men; men who somehow or other did not lose their childhood capacity to wonder, to allow inner feelings to flow unchecked into outer

<sup>1</sup>Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man; an Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 43.

doings, to give form spontaneously to the world as they experienced it.

"From the time Einstein was fifteen or sixteen years old," writes the biographer Leopold Infeld, "he puzzled over the question: what will happen if a man tries to catch a light ray? For years he thought about this problem. Its solution led to relativity theory."<sup>2</sup>

. . . The results of the thoughts he started when he was sixteen were published in 1905 . . . His fame among physicists began some four years later. Einstein told me, "before I was thirty, I never met a real physicist." In Einstein's case it was luck he did not. There was no one to discourage him, though I doubt anyone would have been successful anyway.<sup>3</sup>

Limited control is the Achilles heel of childhood; limited freedom is the Achilles heel of adulthood. The child-man suffers little from either of these limitations. Like other child-men, Einstein did not sacrifice the creative freedom of the child that was in exchange for the critical control of the man that became. Expressing this antipathy for the deadening habitual conformity that so often accompanies adulthood, he once said: "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed."<sup>4</sup>

Far better would it be for us to limit the term "genius" to the entire human race, for then indeed we would be closer to an important truth; then, perhaps, we would recognize and respect the immeasurable inheritance of every child born into the family of man, the creator of symbols.

We are cautioned—often quite justly—about comparing the creative work of children to that of adults. Children are sensitive even to the unspoken comparisons between their work and that of others considered to be more "successful" or "legitimate." Probably the majority of adults in America carry deep scars from the crippling sense of inadequacy they felt as children—the dim but painful realization that they failed to

<sup>2</sup>Leopold Infeld, *Albert Einstein; His Work and its Influence on Our World* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, pp. 119-120.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 116-117. quoted from Albert Einstein's *The World As I See It*.

make a "valid" statement about the world they shared, however incompletely, with adults.

But it is not the mere act of making comparisons between the art of children and adults that is in itself inappropriate. Seriously inappropriate, rather, is a belief that often underlies such comparisons: the belief that art is essentially a technical act involving a high order of skill in creating an illusion of reality. This belief does serious injustice not only to the art of children, but to the art of all mankind, most of which has been and continues to be symbolically expressive and not "realistically" imitative.

The historical record of human expression, so much of which is preserved in visual symbolic form, reveals a deeper and more appropriate meaning of art: primarily it is a humanly emotional and intellectual act, while only secondarily and incidentally it is a mechanical act of optical and technical significance. Art, for child and man alike, is an act whereby seen and felt experiences are transformed into sensual forms. As Ernst Cassirer says: "like all other symbolic forms art is not the mere reproduction of a ready-made, given reality. It is . . . not an imitation but a discovery of reality."<sup>15</sup>

With this human meaning of art in mind, the comparison of children's art to that of adults becomes not only appropriate but desirable. It places the art of child and man on a common human footing; it reveals and celebrates the manhood in the child and the childhood in the man.

## II. THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYMBOL IN CHILDREN'S ART

**SYMBOL:** Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation); esp. a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract.<sup>16</sup>

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Whether or not we see the symbolism in a given expression . . . depends upon the closeness of analogy between the sign and the thing signified. The closer the analogy the less the symbolism and the less evident the analogy the more pronounced the symbolism.<sup>17</sup>

WILLIAM A. WHITE

<sup>15</sup>Op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>16</sup>"Symbol," The Oxford Universal Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 2109.

<sup>17</sup>"Symbolism," The Encyclopedia Americana, Vol. XXVI (1953), 162.

All art is inexorably rooted in human processes of thinking, feeling and perception.<sup>18</sup> It is for this reason that there are many characteristics common to the art of children and the art of ancient and modern men. Some of the most basic of these resemblances may be observed in the earliest use which children make of drawing, painting and modelling materials.

### Pre-Symbolic Beginnings of Children's Art

Just as they babble before they learn to use verbal symbols, children scribble and manipulate plastic materials before they discover the symbolic language of visual expression. Scribbling is initially a muscular or bodily activity. Gradually, however, vision begins to "enter the picture" as seen and felt sensations become interrelated, resulting in the controlled, co-ordinated movement of eye and hand.

Scribbling (and its painting and modelling equivalents) is a projective art. As sense merges into motion and motion into sense,<sup>19</sup> emotional and bodily feelings are automatically projected into the lines and forms that appear on the paper. Because it is not a self-consciously imitative or intellectual art, scribbling lends itself to sensual, emotional and intuitive forms of expression. It is a "non-conscious" symbolic art to the extent that its visual forms are representations of the inner feelings or sensations of the scribbler. Willem de Kooning is one of many contemporary painters who expresses himself in a mode that is comparable.

### Primitive Symbols in Children's Art

Children make relatively conscious use of symbols when the thought occurs to them that there can be an equivocal relationship between an object and a gesture or sound. Thus, the sound "Mama" becomes a verbal symbol, when, in the

<sup>18</sup>A great deal of exploration has been devoted to this area. Outstanding examples are: The Hanover Studies of Perception, Hoyt Sherman's research at Ohio State University, and the writings of Herbert Read, Viktor Lowenfeld, and Henry Schaeffer-Simmern.

<sup>19</sup>Describing the "roots" of esthetic experience in animal behavior, John Dewey wrote: "As you watch, you see motion merging into sense and sense into motion—constituting that animal grace so hard for man to rival." *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 19. These "roots" are also found in the esthetic movements of the scribbling child.

child's mind, it stands for the physical object that is his mother.

Similarly, when the idea occurs to a child that a scribbled line, a splash of color, or a lump of clay can stand for something else (house, car, Mama), he uses these visual forms symbolically. Describing this important stage in the development of children's thinking, Viktor Lowenfeld notes that this is an indication "that the child's thinking has completely changed."

Until now the child has been satisfied with the motions themselves, but henceforth the child connects with his motions imaginative experiences. He has changed from a kinesthetic thinking in terms of motions to an imaginative thinking in terms of pictures.<sup>10</sup>

Because they can imaginatively project themselves into their scribbles, children's first visual symbols tend to be metaphoric in character. The child's scribbled line is "The car driving me to the store;" the line is not meant to show how it would look to be driven to the store. It is because these first-named scribbles represent sensations and ideas rather than images that they tend to be unrecognizable.

Frequently the earliest recognizable symbol for the human body consists of a crudely drawn circle with two lines extending beneath it. This is a typically primitive, highly abstracted symbol representing what, to the child, are important characteristics of the human body. Hence, the face, usually including the animated eye and mouth features, is a prominent part of the symbol. The legs are drawn for the same reason: people are essentially two legged creatures that walk.

Normally these early symbols undergo a constant change in form: the trunk and limbs in body symbols become shapes instead of single "stick" lines; gradually, more details appear to indicate hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, nostrils, ears, fingers, teeth.

These early "idea" symbols that children use bear a resemblance to picture-writing found throughout the world. They give testimony to the natural human urge to give visual form to ideas and sensations. They are the result of a process that a child is reported to have described

<sup>10</sup>Viktor Lowenfeld, *Creative and Mental Growth* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1952), pp. 67-68.

in this way: "I think and then I draw a line around my think."

#### The Geometric Symbol in Children's Art

Through a process of repetition, selection and simplification, the crude, early symbols that children use become more stylized and geometric in form. The evolution of form in the airplane and automobile is somewhat similar to this change that is seen, not only in the art of children, but also in the art of men. Still another analogy is the changing form of a growing tree: beginning as a simple seedling it adds branch after branch while at the same time "avoiding" an over-complexity of form by shedding branches as they outlive their usefulness.

During this period the symbol of the human body tends to be formed out of circular, square or triangular shapes. In their earlier forms, geometric symbols are usually symmetrical; the figure is almost invariably depicted face forward with the arms and legs stiffly radiating out from the trunk at equal angles. As is the case with much Egyptian and Early Christian Art, there is little effort to symbolize depth and movement. This art form is almost dogmatic in its highly controlled expression of order.

#### Naturalistic Symbols in Children's Art

There are no absolutely clear and distinct lines of demarcation which distinguish one level of symbolic form from another. This is especially true of the subtle distinctions that only gradually appear between geometric and naturalistic symbols. Like the earlier geometrical symbol, the naturalistic symbol is stylized and relatively simple in form. However, it differs from the geometric symbol much as non-Euclidean geometry differs from Euclidean geometry. Its forms, like the forms and movements produced in nature, are more subtly irregular. It is this kind of analogy of form between, for example, a tree in nature and a naturalistic symbol of a tree, that accounts for the "realistic" quality some of these symbols appear to possess.

A child's scribble becomes a symbol when he thinks of it symbolically; similarly, an apparently realistic representation is symbolic when the creator (or viewer) thinks of it as an analogy and not as an imitation of nature. The earliest

symbols children use are metaphoric. Naturalistic symbols, however, are similes, that is, parallel-equivalents of nature.

The representations of the human body created by Phidias and Michelangelo are examples of naturalistic symbolism. Closely paralleling the natural form of the human body, they nevertheless express an idealistic or essential quality of the body through a very subtle process of abstraction and distortion. In a similar way children's naturalistic symbols of the human body are idealizations which contain many natural details; the arms, legs and head show movement, and a wealth of detail in the hair and clothing adds a note of realistic plausibility to the form.

#### **The Distortion of Symbols in the Art of Children**

Distortion is an almost automatic result of the impulse to use a symbol expressively. The expressive, distorted symbol is characteristically abstract because it lends itself to the expression of "immaterial" qualities in experience. Children and adults alike will enlarge, bend, juxtapose, and revolve symbols in order to give form to feelings and ideas about time, motion, sound, serenity, turmoil.

A common device used in the art of caricature, distortion is also prominent in the "expressionism" of an El Greco, Picasso or a Jack Levine. It is found in the art of children of all ages, and wherever the forms in a work of art are used as a means of expressing feelings and ideas.

#### **III. CONCLUSIONS: "REALISM" AND THE ART OF CHILDREN**

To some degree all works of representational art are symbolic. Even apparently "realistic" portraits contain forms which are symbolic. A form that appears to faithfully reproduce a facial feature may simultaneously represent an immaterial or abstract quality in the "living" person behind the feature. This kind of symbolism in portraiture is inevitable because it is psychologically impossible for one man to look at another man with absolute objectivity; inner, felt associations leap forward of their own accord and distort, however slightly, his perceptions.

Herein lies a characteristic common to symbolic art as well as to human experience itself. Because of the nature of thinking, feeling and perception, a work of human art cannot be a photographic duplication of an outer, objective reality. An artistic act is inexorably an inner human response to the world as it is experienced. While this is true in varying degrees of all representational art, it is most especially true of the art of children, for whom the highly abstract notion that adults call "objective reality" can have little or no meaning.

Throughout human history—in almost all cultures and at almost all times—symbolic forms have occupied a dominant position in the artistic expressions of men. An outstanding exception to this almost-universal tendency is the highly realistic, non-expressive art that accompanied the declining years of the ancient Greek empire. This is an important exception because it mirrors the current, popular belief in "realistic" art, and the accompanying loss of creative vitality that may be seen in the art of so many American adolescents.

Summarizing this period in Greek history, art historian Helen Gardner says:

In the fourth century we see Phidian austerity giving way to ease and grace, divine majesty and serenity to human sentiment, and tempered naturalism to an illusion of natural appearance. More detailed modelling; an emphasis upon delicate surface treatment; a naturalistic tendency in the use of color; and the conquest in sculpture of space, that is, the attainment of truly three-dimensional figures—all these characteristics are the logical evolution of the naturalistic trend. These characteristics of the trend developed in the Hellenistic age into theatrical emotionalism and realism, and triviality in the face of poverty of ideas. A truly magnificent technical skill busied itself, like a virtuoso, in surface treatment for its own sake, in making stone look like soft flesh quite disregardful of the natural capacities and limitations of the material. Ornament became riotous, an end in itself, and thus broke down the complete unity which characterized the more disciplined work of earlier centuries. The archaic tendency that now appeared was only one more mask of a decadent age. . .<sup>31</sup>

As recently as the beginning of the 20th century a remarkably similar art flourished in the

(please turn to page 18)

<sup>31</sup>Helen Gardner, *Art Through the Ages* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936), p. 179.

## NEA CENTENNIAL ART EXHIBITION

As a contribution to the Centennial Celebration of the National Education Association, the National Art Education Association, an affiliate of NEA, is developing an exhibition showing 100 years of progress in art education.

The exhibition will be installed in the Philadelphia Commercial Museum where the NEA will hold its Centennial Convention June 30-July 5, 1957.

The committee appointed to develop the exhibition consists of the following: Dr. Earl Millette, Director of Art, public schools of Philadelphia; Professor Raphael Sabatini, The Tyler School of Temple University; Mrs. Louise Ballinger, Director, Teacher Education, The Philadelphia Museum School of Art; Mr. Edward Palanica, Chairman, Department of Art Education, Moore Institute of Arts and Sciences; Dr. Horace F. Heilman, Professor of Art Education, State Teachers College, Kutztown, Pa.; Professor J. Allen Pawling of KSTC; Mr. Kenneth Disher, Curator of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (ex-officio); and Dr. I. L. deFrancesco, Director of Art Education at KSTC, as Chairman. In addition, the following students in art education from the institutions named above will collaborate: Jane Steinsnyder, Allen Pease, Doris Schaeffer of the Philadelphia Museum School; Dennis Leon, James O'Reilly of The Tyler School; Shirley Muller, Ruth Brooke of the Moore Institute; and Michael Roush, Dolores Zensen, Constance Neilsen, Neil Haring of KSTC.

The exhibition will present three phases of growth: first, an historical review from documentary sources; second, the art work of children in the schools of America today, including every state in the Union; third, a cross section of art teacher education today.

The over-all intention of the exhibition is to show progress in philosophy, technics, and approach from the imitation of early years to creation of our time. The work of children is being gathered from small, medium size, and large communities so as to present an adequate survey. The common stress will be on ORIGINALITY.



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## THE ADMINISTRATOR VIEWS TRENDS IN ART EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

RALPH R. FIELDS,  
Director  
Division of Instruction  
Teachers College,  
Columbia University

The trends in any field of instruction must be viewed in light of the purposes conceived for the schools. As a matter of fact, all trends are considered good or bad, promising or unpromising, in terms of purposes. Among the distinctly American purposes I would list the following as a backdrop against which to view any discernible trends:

1. To aid students in the development of self-understanding
2. To stimulate the power of straight thinking
3. To foster the abilities needed to communicate
4. To encourage the enjoyment of life
5. To help formulate lasting values.

What I would like to do first is to note five trends which appear to me as evident; second, to assess these in terms of the purposes just listed; and finally, to state a few issues regarding art education which these trends seem to raise.

### The Trends

The first trend has to do with art itself. Art is increasingly becoming a part of everyday living rather than an aesthetic matter reserved for the few. This seems to be reflected both in word and in action all around us. A particularly clear description of this trend is found in the chapter by Arthur Young in the First Yearbook of the National Art Education Association, issued in 1951.

The impact of this trend on art education has been to broaden the concept of art in the schools.

<sup>1</sup>Speech given at the joint meeting of the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators at Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 18, 1957.

In earlier days art was pretty largely conceived of as drawing and painting. Compare the multitude of activities found in the schools of today: sculpturing, modeling in all kinds of materials, ceramics, jewelry and metal work, wood-work, puppetry, silk-screen processes, and the many others that will occur to you. Our second trend is that art education is broadening.

The third trend is almost a corollary of the second: the distinction between the fine arts and the industrial arts is growing less and less. This in part is due to the gradual emerging of aesthetic values in industrial design and in the plastic arts, and in part to the broadening of the conception of the fine arts, which we have just discussed. The actual cooperative labors on the part of industrial arts educators and fine arts educators have in no small measure hastened this trend. Because of these factors, these two fields in education are beginning to draw more closely together and in some situations a single program is being established. That has happened at Teachers College, for instance, where the program is a unified one.

The fourth trend is that art activities are becoming increasingly valued as experiences for everybody, not just for the gifted few.

We have seen this most clearly in the elementary school, where art activities constitute a main part of projects and units of work, and where artistic elements have been stressed in other aspects of the program as well. Accompanying this trend we have seen the establishment of the integrated or self-contained class room, in contrast with the platoon system, the special classroom, the special teacher, and the like.

In the junior and senior high schools we see the inclusion of art content in core courses, in the social studies, in the language arts, and in other fields. We find exploratory art courses required of all students, and elective courses in art opened to all, not reserved just for the talented.

In college this trend is implemented by the introduction of art into the general education program, and by the emphasis upon the graphic and plastic arts in humanities courses.

At all levels, we see art taking a more prominent place in the education of all students.

The fifth and last trend to be mentioned is that the goal of self-development and self-expression is replacing the stress on the mastery of art techniques. In a sense this trend is part of a broader social movement which has been taking place over the last hundred years. Think for a minute of these major changes: modern labor legislation, the introduction of child labor laws, the elimination of corporal punishment as an accepted social procedure, the introduction of the psychological study of youth and children, and the introduction of psychiatry into medicine.

Also allied to the stress on self-development and self-expression in art have been broad developments in education. The elimination of the conception of education as a lock-step operation, with everybody taking the same work in elementary, high school and college, has occurred within this time span. The movement generally known as Progressive Education did much to call attention to the importance of self-expression, and the child-centered school stressed the concept of self-development, as did also the guidance and child-study movements. The project, the activity movement and the unit-method of teaching laid stress on these concepts as well.

In art, this trend has brought freedom into art activities in place of the set task. I recall quite vividly in the eighth grade a special art teacher coming to our room and putting us through certain set exercises. The first one was to draw a bowl. How many footstools have been made in woodshop as a result of this same concept.

Contrast this with the various media to be explored by students today. The change not only introduces varied media, but represents in addition the shift from stress on **product** to emphasis on the feeling of satisfaction. There is also inherent the idea that the assessment of self takes place in terms of emotions as well as in relationship to skills and abilities.

#### Trends in Light of Purposes

Let's examine three of these trends against the purposes which were listed at the beginning.

**Art education is broadening.** It seems clear that the greater the range of experiences, the better chance a person has for understanding himself and his abilities; thus this trend would

seem to contribute to self-understanding. With respect to the development of the power of thinking, in general it would be the quality of the learning experience rather than the breadth alone which would be the major determinant. However, the range of problems encountered should have some bearing on one's facility to think through different kinds of problems.

Since all art media are means of communication, the broadening of art should increase the communicative power of the individual.

Individuals differ greatly one from another; the greater variety of art experiences met, the greater chance that each individual may find some means of increasing his enjoyment. Consequently the broadening trend should be a good trend with respect to this purpose.

In relationship to the formulation of values we have no guarantee that the breadth of one's activities will affect his values. Conversely, however, the range of activities is no bar to the refinement of values, so with respect to this purpose the trend appears neutral.

In relationship to our stated purposes, as analyzed in the preceding paragraphs, we may well conclude that the broadening trend in art education is in harmony with our major purposes.

**Art for everybody.** With respect to the purposes of self-understanding and communication, art is peculiarly valuable in helping individuals to understand themselves and to communicate their thoughts. It would seem of critical importance that as many people as possible have the benefit of such experiences.

The possibility of an individual contacting the field of art might spell the difference between the ability to enjoy art and unacquaintance with that pleasure.

In relationship to life's values we have come slowly to the realization that these are formed on an emotional basis as well as on an intellectual one. Consequently, the opportunity for each person to have some experiences in the field of art as an emotional approach to values becomes an important consideration. In addition, in life aesthetic and artistic values are essential in and of themselves. How is the ordinary individual to develop any such values without contacting the field? From both these standpoints, the trend of

**art for everybody** would seem to be a singularly important one in respect to the formulation of life values.

For some, but probably not for all, art may become a medium for developing straight thinking.

Once again, we find in looking back over our analysis that the trend, **art for everybody**, would seem to be very harmonious with the purposes set up.

**Expression versus mastery.** Self-expression is generally conceded as basic to self-understanding, so here we have almost a one-to-one relationship between the trend and the purpose.

Since the power of communication depends upon the ability to express one's idea in some fashion, the stress on self-expression would seem in close harmony with the purpose of communication. Techniques are essential too—it is not an "either-or" proposition. But stress on the spirit of self-expression is basic to the development of techniques.

Enjoyment, it seems to me, is enhanced by the opportunity to tell somebody about our joy. A few days ago I hung two recently-acquired paintings in my office. What did I do? I immediately went across the hall to find a colleague to come in and share my enjoyment. This, it seems to me, is natural.

Values flow out of expressing our feelings and our thoughts. The expression leads to fuller commitment. In fact, it seems to me that values have to be thought about and have to be expressed in order to become strong elements in our daily living.

Again, the relationship to straight thinking may be one of the quality of the experience rather than whether the experience is one of expression or of mastering a technique. Both are essential to the quality of thought.

To sum up our examination of the relationship of trends to purposes, we would have to say that our trends seem to enhance our purposes rather than work against them. But there are problems raised!

### Problems and Issues

1. "Does the broadening of the concept of art education diminish the true integrity of the fine arts?"

This is an issue which all of us have heard expressed in one form or another. It may take the shape of the question, "Does industrial arts debase the aesthetic value of the graphic arts?" or again, it may be asked, "Is the tendency for fine arts and industrial arts to work together a good one?" Regardless of the exact question asked, there would seem to be an issue regarding the broadening of art education.

2. "Does the concept of art for everybody and art in general education tend to subordinate art to other subjects?"

This issue, I am sure, you have met time and time again. It might be expressed in a slightly different way as whether a little bit of art is not such a smattering that it does the person no good. Or, it might take the form of whether we are short-changing our talented art people by spending our energy on attempting to introduce everybody to art. Whatever the question, the issue is there. My own feeling is that the integrity of the fine arts is enhanced through its more integral relationship with other fields, and its inclusion in general education.

3. "Has the stress on expression submerged the importance of developing skills?"

This issue is frequently expressed in the form of a question, "Are standards of no value?"

4. "Can a single classroom teacher handle the basic elementary subjects and the special fields, particularly art?"

This issue brings in its train such questions as, "What is the role of the consultant?" "What is the special teacher?" In the secondary school the question becomes, "What should be the relationship between the core teacher and the art teacher?" and at the college level, "Can one teacher handle a broad humanities course?"

### In Summary

In brief, we have looked at five trends: **art is a part of everyday living**, **art education is broadening**, **the difference between the fine arts and industrial arts is disappearing**, **art activities are for everybody**, and **emphasis on self-expression**

(please turn to page 18)

## PROFESSIONAL NEWS

PAULINE JOHNSON

Associate Professor of Art  
University of Washington, Seattle

### CONFERENCES

By the time this issue of the magazine arrives the National Conference in Los Angeles will be well under way, and art educators from all over the United States will be getting together to exchange views, report on progress and receive inspiration from the exciting visual presentations promised by Dr. John Olsen and his committee. If present reports hold true this should be a meeting that is worth making unusual efforts to attend, and a real opportunity for eastern educators to see western life and become informed about art activities on the West Coast.

Many will also be attending the NEA CENTENNIAL Convention (1857-1957) in Philadelphia from June 30-July 5, where the NAEA will be represented with an art exhibit.

A meeting of interest to craftsmen is announced by Craft Horizons Magazine. It is the first NATIONAL CRAFTSMEN'S CONFERENCE, under the sponsorship of the American Craftsmen's Council, and will be held at beautiful Asilomar on the shore of the Monterey Peninsula in Northern California, June 12-14. Inexpensive accommodations will be available for three hundred craftsmen, and famous craftsmen in this country and from Europe will provide talks and demonstrations. For details, see the March-April issue of Craft Horizons Magazine.

Are you aware of the COLLEGE TEACHERS OF ART EDUCATION section of the NAEA? About eight hundred names are on the mailing list, and if your name should be there too, write to the chairman, Dr. Harry Guillaume, Head of the Art Department, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa. In this way you will receive news and information pertaining to the activities of the group.

### EXHIBITIONS

The Art Institute of Chicago and the MIDWEST DESIGNER CRAFTSMEN group are sponsoring an exhibition at the Institute in March and April, open to all craftsmen in the middle western area. The jury will be Dorothy Liebes, John Paul Miller, and Peter Voulkos.

Mr. David Campbell of the New Hampshire Arts and Crafts Association, juried the NORTHWEST CRAFTSMEN'S exhibition held in March at the Henry Art Gallery on the University of Washington campus in Seattle.

### STATE NEWS

The annual meeting of the WASHINGTON ART ASSOCIATION will be held in Richland in May, with Glenn Wessels of the University of California as the main speaker. Francis Coehlo is convention chairman.

The "UNITED FOR ART ACTION IN EDUCATION" committee of the Washington Art Association held a meeting at the University of Washington to continue efforts to bring art educators and administrators together. Present from various parts of the state were an assistant superintendent of schools, a member of the state department of education, a county superintendent of schools, a classroom teacher, a representative of the state Parent-Teachers Congress, an elementary art consultant, a public school director of art, and a University art education professor. The state has been divided into fourteen areas with an appointed representative in each who is to select a team of associates to help work with principals and other administrative associations in promoting good art education.

### ANNOUNCING

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## FELLOWSHIPS

The Brooklyn Museum is offering two fellowships in Museum training for qualified students who have completed one year of graduate work in the fine arts or allied fields. The fifteen-month fellowships pay \$4,000 each and applications must be made by March 31 to: Chairman, Fellowship Committee, The Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn 38, New York. The winners will be announced on May 15 and training will begin October 1, 1957. The Museum is presently undergoing a program of modernization costing \$3,500,000.

## STUDY AND TRAVEL TOURS

Those desiring an opportunity to combine travel with study will find a number of attractive tours available from colleges and universities throughout the country.

The four Scandinavian countries and six others in Europe will be visited, and eight credits may be earned if desired, from a tour led by Reino Randall, Associate Professor of Art at Central Washington College, Ellensburg, Washington. The forty-five days of travel will extend from June 21 to August 4 from New York. An attractive folder explaining the details may be obtained by writing to Mr. Randall at the above address.

A travel course in European Art covering the principal cities in France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Holland, and England is offered again by the University of Minnesota. Five regular university credits may be earned, and the tour extends from July 6 to September 4. For more information and registration forms write to Professor Donald Torbert, Department of Art, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.

The "Western European Art Study Tour" sponsored by the Department of Fine and Applied Arts of Teachers College, Columbia University was mentioned in this column last month. Six points may be earned while visiting Greece, Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, and England under the experienced guidance of Dr. Jack Arends who has conducted a number of

such tours. The entire trip will cover fifty-one days from July 12 to September 1, however a detailed itinerary may be secured by writing to Dr. Arends.

Dr. May Bryce of San Francisco State College, is again heading up the "Art in Action" credit tours which give six college credits to those desiring them. The tours start June 20 from New York and end August 4. Those wishing to participate in the Paris Workshop can do so for a slight extra fee for the additional three weeks session.

For the NEA Post-Convention tours, write to the Division of Travel Service, 1201 16th Street, N.W. Washington 6, D. C. Reservations will be accepted up to May 17, 1957. The following six tours are offered:

**Around the World** (in cooperation with Western Illinois State College) will leave New York July 9 and arrive in San Francisco August 26.

**Scandinavian and General European** (in cooperation with Western Illinois State College) will begin July 10 and end August 22.

**General European** leaves New York July 10 and returns August 25.

**Mexico** (in cooperation with New Jersey State Teachers College) extends from July 11 to August 2.

**West Indies** from July 7 to July 26.

**New England—French Canada**—Leaves Philadelphia July 6 and returns July 23. This is a Greyhound Motor Coach trip.

The NEA in cooperation with the California Teachers Association is sponsoring a NEA Centennial Celebration Eastern Cities Tour which leaves San Francisco June 24, includes New York, the NEA Convention in Philadelphia, Washington, D. C., and arrives back in San Francisco July 10.



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

Various cities have sponsored a "Festival of the Arts" to help create more interest in these important fields. The one in Birmingham was held in mid-winter and lasted for three weeks. The Allied Arts in Seattle is sponsoring one for the first week of May, looking forward to the construction of a civic center and world's fair in 1960.

Of interest is the Eichler house in Palo Alto, referred to as "X-100 Home" which is an experimental project aimed to test the practicability of some far advanced architectural and construction ideas.

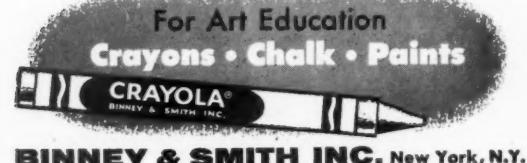
Alvin Gittins, portrait painter, is the new head of the art department at the University of Utah. Twain Tippetts is the new head of the art department at Utah State Agricultural College.

## NEWS SOURCES

It is not the intention of this column to overlook activities in the various regional and state associations, however, unless information is received it cannot be included. Material must arrive by the tenth of the month in order to be printed in the following month's publication. Some of the states forward their regular publications as source material. The most interesting one received to date is the Art Bulletin of the Utah Art Educators Association, consisting of eight printed pages containing photographs and other illustrations. The editor is Mr. Delbert Smedley of Salt Lake City.

Many people will have their plans for the summer already worked out by the time this issue of the Journal arrives, however two conferences of outstanding importance are scheduled at that time and bear consideration.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION THROUGH ART (INSEA) founded in 1954 at its First General Assembly in Paris, is organizing its Second General Assembly to be held



August 19-23, 1957 at the Hague, Holland. The Central theme will be "ART EDUCATION AND ADOLESCENCE" with major speakers addressing the Assembly on topics dealing with this subject. The meetings of the Assembly will be conducted in three working languages: English, French and German. Cooperating with INSEA on the arrangements is the host organization, the NETHERLANDS SOCIETY FOR ART EDUCATION. For further information about this important meeting write to: Dr. Edwin Ziegfeld, President, INSEA, Department of Fine & Industrial Arts, Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120 St., New York 27, N.Y.

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### TRENDS IN ART EDUCATION

(continued from page 14)

**is replacing the stress on mastery of techniques.** An examination has indicated that these trends are in harmony with the general purposes characteristic of American education, but that certain issues would seem to be raised with respect to these trends. Chief among these are the questions, "Is art losing its integrity?" and "Is art becoming subordinated in general education?" I have indicated my responses; others may differ. It is through the exploration of such differences that progress is stimulated.

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### SYMBOLISM IN CHILDREN'S ART

(continued from page 10)

United States. A carry-over from the pseudo-realistic and ostentatious art of the late 19th century "Gilded Age", these forms continue to flourish in popular mass media of communication.<sup>12</sup>

What is tragic—certainly from a psychological as well as a cultural point of view—is the slowness with which this provincial taste for "realism" is vanishing from the American scene. For this taste is a wall that separates many Americans from more than the rich expressiveness of symbolic art. It has also made the American a stranger to the creative capacities within himself, and to the immeasurable inheritance of every child born into the family of man, the creator of symbols.

<sup>12</sup>For a penetrating analysis of this period in American art, read the works of Lewis Mumford. Of special interest is his *American Taste* (San Francisco: Westgate Press, 1929). An examination of the implications of art and symbolism in contemporary American civilization is found in "Art and the Symbol," *Art and Technics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).

## ART EDUCATION FOR THE ADOLESCENT

(continued from page 2)

phy and psychology of education can contribute much to the child's growth toward intellectual maturity. It is a realistic Art Education program that is planned around experiences which stimulate the use and organization of materials; which aids in acquiring, relating and interpreting facts; and which encourages the cultivation of intellectual potentials for personal as well as social good.

Art Education today readily lends itself to the development of the "whole" individual in quest of maturity.

Growth toward physical, emotional, social, and intellectual maturity should bring the adolescent to a contemplation of life in the broadest aspects. A reconsideration of values and ideals is often the fortunate result.

Probably only the most precocious of adolescents enters adulthood with a completely mature philosophy of life. However, as adulthood draws closer, the individual should begin to examine and select values to make life meaningful for him. A beginning in this direction is all that can be expected. Art Education can provide the growing personality a point of departure.

Actually, there are two main purposes of teaching art: first, to assist the individual in developing to the fullest his creative potential; and, second, to help him in becoming a valued and cooperative member of society.

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## DOCTRINE, DICTATORSHIP AND THE EYES OF CHILDREN

(continued from page 6)

piece has conditions which limit the number of forms one can choose to include. The shapes U.P.A. uses to signify "Mr. Magoo's" pet pooch in its animated cartoons are out, that much at least is clear.

It seems, then, as though there is some hermetic but definite relation between theme and the mode of plastic organization in painting. Furthermore, some themes place greater restrictions on the field of exploitation than others.

During the Medieval period no subject matter without religious intent was handled by the artist. The themes of painting and sculpture were religious. But a religion is a universal metaphysic which accommodates all human experience in a thoroughgoing fashion. Religious art is rich in symbolism and secondary thematic material. Observe the loaves and fishes (still-life), the penetrations into Satan's realm, the fanciful carving of the grotesques and gargoyles of a French Gothic cathedral, the pure abstraction of a rose window.

One would not wish to maintain that the political theme has no potential whatsoever for such multiplicity of visual experience, but to date it has failed to demonstrate any such potential. The political deals with but a single aspect of human destiny, the attempt to influence the course of history. As a theme it has strict conditions, the same conditions as a slogan. The work must incite to action, or prompt contentment, and this within the realm of the prosaic interests. It is apparent that the central interests of modern dictatorship (Communist, fascist, or quasi-republican) eliminate the painter who would, like Paul Klee, search the strange forests and dark vistas of the interior mind for inspiration.<sup>2</sup>

In regard to *Through the Eyes of Children* it

<sup>2</sup>It might be noted, however, that neither Marx nor Engels ever really held that the economic was the sole drive that prompted or ought prompt men to thought. But as Engels pointed out in a letter: "(Marx and I) were compelled to emphasize its central character in opposition to our opponents who denied it, and there wasn't always time, place and occasion to do justice to the other factors in the reciprocal interactions of the historical process."

can be said that no matter how ably orchestrated the color of the paintings, knowingly fitted the pieces, or spontaneously struck the lines, there is a clear danger to the culture at large in demanding its child artists and mature artists (whose work in no way resembles the children's) to conform to an ordered set of political assertions. The society that makes such demands is engaged in a massive deception which must eventually deprive it of those creative energies that cannot "toe the party line." The danger to the culture at large is paramount whenever the arts, in either their form or content, are put to the service of cant and propaganda. This rule brooks no exception.

In the more general arena of interest it enables us to explain other curiosities such as the origins of Jazz and German Expressionism. Both arose in highly authoritarian atmospheres. But both the music of the American Negro and the works of the German intelligentsia in Munich and Dresden just prior to World War I have another common feature in that both were not subject to the scrutiny or direction of authority. Jazz was the Negro's almost sole entertainment; the world of the spirit was the single realm of being unharassed by Prussian authority at the time in Germany. By the same token Jazz and German Expressionism were far richer and more inventive than anything produced in the arts by the master-culture about them.<sup>3</sup>

The thesis that an overriding danger exists whenever art is put to the ends of political su-

<sup>3</sup>In the nineteenth century Heinrich Heine had already expressed this fact of German life when he wrote: "The land belongs to the Russians and French; The sea belongs to the British; But we possess in the cloudland of dreams the uncontested dominion." Such a statement depends upon the viewpoint of the German intellectual from at least that time to the end of World War I. It was widely recognized that for Germany to make a place among modern nations many autonomous principalities had to be unified—by force if nothing else. That necessitated a centralized government with absolute power of decision in things political and economic. But the world of thought was "uncontested"—that is, the world's rulers were uninterested in controlling abstract thought because of its irrelevance to the hard logic of practical affairs.

sion not only identifies the pedagogical, aesthetical and social difficulties inherent in the Polish Communist method, but gives the art educator a rationale with which to defend himself against the Huntington Hartfords of the world. Such a rationale is needed at this moment, for numerous attempts have been made recently to secure public sanction for the authoritarian propaganda principle as applied to the fine arts. This principle presumes nothing so agreeable as that the fine arts should have a place in the converse of nations, but demands, rather, that art production itself ought be directed toward the ends of propaganda. The example of the Texas scandal, of the pressure put upon our State Department to withdraw from international circulation the show of contemporary American painting indicates the existence of such a viewpoint and that it has proponents in powerful places. This view does not depend so much on philistinism as we have tended to think; it depends far more upon that contemptible habit of thought which puts political advantage above human freedom and wagers immediate ends against the culture itself. This is not only a delusion, it is a trap. It is a trap for the art educator because, to the degree he enters into it or is snared by it, he loses his power of personal decision and deprives his students of experiences that may have an accord with their needs. It is a snare for the nation because it commits the seeds of culture to the barren grounds of practical justification. It is a trap. And the most dangerous trap, as our old enemy Karl Marx himself recognized, is not the trap another nation sets for us, but the one we set for ourselves.

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